

United States Department of Agriculture,

FOREST SERVICE—Circular 23 (Fourth Revision).

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SUGGESTIONS TO PROSPECTIVE FOREST STUDENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Forest Service receives a large and increasing number of requests for information upon matters treated in this circular. Such inquiries from those who think of taking up forestry as are not covered by this circular will always be answered willingly. It will be understood, however, that although the Forest Service stands ready, so far as it can, to assist and advise the forest student, it can reasonably go no further than to explain the situation and point out the means by which a man may prepare himself for forest work. It can no more assume the responsibility of deciding for the prospective forest student whether he will do well to take up forestry than it can predict to what position he will attain as a forester.

PREPARATION FOR FORESTRY.

The preparation for forestry as a profession may best begin with a college or university course, in which the student should acquire some knowledge of the auxiliary subjects necessary in forestry. Of these, the more important are geology, physical geography, mineralogy, chemistry, botany—in particular that branch which deals with the anatomy, physiology, and life history of plants—and pure and applied mathematics, including a practical understanding of the principles of surveying. The student who, in his college course, can include physics, meteorology, and political economy will be the better equipped to take up his technical forest studies.

Graduation at a college or university should be followed by a full course at a school of instruction in professional forestry, of which there are now several in this country.

Vacations, during the course of training, should be spent in the woods so far as possible. The student should take advantage of every opportunity to study forest conditions and to acquaint himself with technical forest methods in field work. He should also see all he can of lumbering, which, on its executive side, is closer to forestry than to any other calling. A good knowledge of the lumberman's methods is an essential part of a forester's education.

Whenever possible the forest student will find it of advantage to supplement his systematic studies in this country by six months to a year spent in studying the effects of forestry upon the forest in Europe. Although European forest methods can seldom be adopted without modification in this country, they have been rich in suggestions in the application of practical forestry to American forests. The American forest student who puts aside a chance to see forestry in Europe makes the same mistake that a medical student would be guilty of who ignored an opportunity to practice in the best hospitals abroad.

College or university training, followed by a full course at a forest school and supplemented by work in the woods in this country and in Europe, may not be possible for every student of forestry. A thorough preparation for forestry as a profession should, however, include these lines of work. How many of them the student may omit and still retain a fair chance of success in his profession can not be laid down altogether within hard and fast lines, although study at a forest school has become essential. A great deal must depend upon a man's zeal and industry, and upon his natural fitness for forest work. On the other hand, the man who is considering forestry as a profession will do well to remember that the only sound basis for success in forestry, as in any other scientific profession, is a thorough and systematic preparation; and that in this country, perhaps more than in any other, forest problems present difficulties which require, above all, a thorough understanding of his work in the man who undertakes to deal with them.

POSITION OF FOREST ASSISTANT.

There is no position in the Service open to those whose training in forestry is incomplete. The position in the Service open to trained foresters is that of Forest Assistant. It carries a salary of from \$900 to \$1,000 a year in the beginning, with the payment of all living and traveling expenses incident to field work. The position entails a severe technical examination under the U. S. Civil Service Commission, which no man may reasonably expect to pass unless he has been thoroughly trained in forestry.

THE OPENING FOR FORESTERS.

The management of the National Forests requires the services of many trained men. The Forest Service will require an increasing number of suitably prepared foresters to supply its needs. The lack of foresters to care for the forest interests of the several States is already making itself strongly felt. An increasing number of foresters will be required by private forest owners, as the great holders of timberlands come to realize more generally that conservative lumbering pays better than the methods usually employed. The Forestry Bureau in the Philippines offers what is in some ways an unrivaled opportunity to trained men.

As regards compensation, forestry offers the well-equipped man a fair living. It is naturally impossible to foretell what eventually will be the pay of foresters in this country. It is reasonably certain, however, that their salaries will never be large. Trained foresters in the employ of the Forest Service now receive from \$900 to \$5,000 a year.

Approved:

JAMES WILSON,

Secretary of Agriculture.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *September 1, 1905.*